



The Land We Love
Wendell Phillips Stafford



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THE LAND WE LOVE

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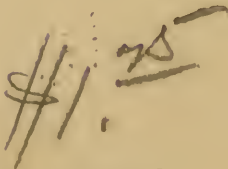
POEMS CHIEFLY PATRIOTIC

By
WENDELL PHILLIPS STAFFORD

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no. 1.

INVOCATION

O *THOU whose equal purpose runs
In drops of rain or streams of suns,
And with a soft compulsion rolls
The green earth on her snowy poles;
O Thou who keepest in thy ken
The times of flowers, the dooms of men,
Stretch out a mighty wing above—
Be tender to the land we love!*

*If all the huddlers from the storm
Have found her hearthstone wide and warm;
If she has made men free and glad,
Sharing, with all, the good she had;
If she has blown the very dust
From her bright balance to be just,
Oh, spread a mighty wing above—
Be tender to the land we love!*

*When in the dark eternal tower
The star-clock strikes her trial hour,
And for her help no more avail
Her sea-blue shield, her mountain mail,
But sweeping wide, from Gulf to Lakes,
The battle on her forehead breaks,
Throw Thou a thunderous wing above—
Be lightning for the land we love!*

CONTENTS

Invocation	5
Voices	11
Panama Hymn	23
Columbus	24
The Republic	25
Lincoln	30
"One of Our Presidents"	31
Funeral March	32
On the Photograph of a Lynching	33
The Curse	35
Peace and War	36
Dies Iræ	37
A Prayer for Peace	38
The Oath	39
New York	40
Mens Judex	41
The Poet's Call	42
A Branch of Pine	44
Epigram	45
Wendell Phillips	46
The Wendell Phillips Centenary	49
On a Portrait of Henry W. Paine	52
To Simon Wolf	53
Garrison at Bennington	54
The Shaw Memorial	55
William Lloyd Garrison	55
The Cry of the Dark	56

The Forum	57
Vermont: A Song	58
Vermont: An Ode	59
Come Home	63
The Old Pine	64
Thaddeus Fairbanks	67
The Spirit of Autumn	68
The Secret	69
Robin	70
To N. B.	72
To Wendell Holmes Garrison	73
To L. A. L.	75
My Inheritance	75
A Petition for Guardian	76
A More Particular Description	79
Cid	81
My Lady of Dreams	82
The Olive Branch	83
What Will Robin Say?	84
Naming the Baby	85
Lullaby	86
The Boy Who Laughs	87
R. S. S.	88
Cœlum non Animum Mutant	89
An Old Bible	90
Easter	92
My Defense	92
The Boyhood of Jesus	93
Behold the Day	95
A Prayer	96
Lyrics I-XXVII	97

THE LAND WE LOVE

VOICES

A Dramatic Ode for the Forty-ninth Annual Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic—Read at the General Campfire, Washington, D. C., September 29, 1915

VOICE OF THE AVENUE

I HAVE watched on this way for a hundred years;
I have thrilled to a hundred thousand cheers;
By me the millions have come and gone—
Nothing like this have my eyes looked on!
Strange procession, whence have you strayed?
Are you a march or a masquerade?
Thousands of graybeards limping along,
Waking my echoes of conquering song—
Gallant old army without a gun,
Too feeble to fight, too plucky to run!

You cannot mean to tell me, by those old flags you bear,
When the armies were disbanded, in the '60's, *you* were
there?

You have marched with old Tecumseh? In the wilderness
with Grant?

Don't expect me to believe it, venerable men, you can't!
Still too well can I remember every boyish trick and
look,

When their tread rang through the city and their chant
the welkin shook,

All the songs they had been singing from the mountains
to the sea—

Glory, glory, halleluiah—with the sour-apple tree!

For days they were shaking me, thud upon thud,
Their boot-tops reddened with Maryland mud.
Their ranks kept the swing the long marches had
learned;

“Old Abe,” the bald eagle, looked round unconcerned.
Some had brightened their buttons and mended their
flags;

Whole armies went by in their road stain and rags.
That youngster had called, as they passed by a farm;
A rooster was crowing from under his arm.
You, reverend sir, you say are the same?
Why, then, you’ll excuse me; my eyes are to blame!
Your make-up is such a perfect disguise—

VOICE OF COLUMBIA

They are still the same in Columbia’s eyes.
Their trappings are altered, their step may be strange,
In the sight of the mother they never can change.
She tells them by signs no season destroys—
I know you, I know you, my old, brave boys!
Few are ye coming—few, ye say—
Only a corporal’s guard today
To the armies on armies that marched away!
Your eyes are holden; look up and see!
Not there with you—they are here with me.

All that saluted in '65,
All the dead—they are here, alive!
All that passed in flame and smoke,
All whose heart in the hell-pens broke,
All that were flung in the mingled graves,
All that were swung in the shrouds of the waves.
They have come to my muster without a sound;
By the hundred thousand they hem me round;
They flow like a mantle, miles of blue!
Farragut comes with his fighting crew;
The boys are down from the hills again,
The devil-care riders, and Stannard's men.
Here is rank and file, leader and man,
Hancock and Hooker and Sheridan!
Logan is here, of the raven lock,
Thomas, the Chickamauga Rock,
Kearny, with eye like a saber-flash,
Sherman, biting his brief mustache!
Grant is watching you, silent and grim,
With the smile of a child in the heart of him.
Give them hurrahs—cheer upon cheer!
No one is missing . . . Lincoln is here!
Lincoln, my lowliest son,
 Whom I exalted then,
My man of griefs, whose face was marred
 More than the sons of men!
Prince from among the people,
 Who bore their sneer and frown,
Who took their cross upon his back,
 And wore their thorny crown—
The wisdom of the serpent,

The mildness of the dove—
Throned on your constant hearts, and crowned
With more than royal 'love!

VOICE OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE

O thou that on that April day
Went down the bitter road to death,
While freedom stumbled on her way,
Her beacon blown out with a breath—

Look back upon thy people now!
Behold the work thy hands have wrought,
The conquest of thy bleeding brow,
The harvest of thy sleepless thought.

From sea to sea, from palm to pine,
The day of lord and slave is done;
The wind will float no flag but thine;
The long-divided house is one.

More proudly will Potomac wind
Past thy pure temple to the sea;
But, ah! the hearts of men will find
No marble white enough for thee!

VOICES OF THE VETERANS PASSING COLUMBIA

Mother all-glorious, gentle and august,
On whom time leaves no wrinkle, war no scars—
Dowered with the future as the heavens are just,
Robed in the sunrise, mantled with the stars—

We who have overpassed the mountain bars
And are descending in the vale of years
Salute thee as we leave thee! Nothing mars
The moment of our parting—shame nor tears—
But, even as we came, we pass away—with cheers!

Thy beauty smote us when our heart was young—
The pale, terrific beauty of thy face
Flecked with red rain from battle, loved and sung
By bards born worthy of their hour and race.
All things were new: strange forms of power and grace
Rose at thy coming, and the land grew bright
With thine own splendor, while the mighty space
Found of thy fearless feet ran out of sight
In prophecies of dawn, and there was no more night!

We loved thee for the dangers thou hadst passed—
For the crushed serpent that had bruised thy heel,
The furnace years wherein the hell-hot blast
(Which, not consuming, only could anneal)
Had turned thy basest ore to tempered steel!
But most we loved thee for the god-emprise
That rolled away the stone with broken seal,
And bade the buried human spirit rise
To find the heaven he sought in thy sun-kindled eyes.

Then, then we knew, however since forgot,
Men are but one in blood, where'er it runs.
By four great Judgment years the truth was taught.
We learned it of the rains and of the suns,
Rolling orations of the deep-mouthed guns,
Fierce exclamations of the bursting mine,

When thy swart heroes and thy fair-browed ones
Went to one grave of glory, line on line!
Their dust sinks to one mold, or clambers in one vine.

The seals were broken from the books of heaven;
Long-vialed wrath was poured upon the earth;
And to the four winds were the trumpets given
To sound in ears of men a new time's birth.
God said: There shall be fire on every hearth,
And on the meanest board there shall be bread;
Instead of tears I will have song and mirth.
See that ye bind for frontlets on your head
This word my finger writes, making your whole land red!

VOICE OF COLUMBIA

Hail, *Brotherhood!* all-blessing *Brotherhood!*
Without whose touch freedom herself is vile,
And dies in surfeit, sick of her own food,
And even mercy may forget to smile.
Strong fellow traveler, for every mile
Men would compel thee, going with them twain—
Be patient with their blindness yet awhile,
And they may come to see thy visage plain,
And crown thee in their hearts, nor fall from thee again!

The brothers' war that stained my peaceful river,
Wounding the land which it could not divide,
Leaves to my sons one heritage for ever—
One flag, one hope, one sorrow, and one pride.
Here let the great bridge leap from side to side,

Telling my lovers in the fields Elysian,
Each radiant arch, reflected in the tide,
Shines like the bow of promise, in my vision:
Buried beneath the flood be wrath, reproach, derision!

Not here alone, on Arlington's famed field;
Lustered with hero-tombs as night with stars—
Where Gettysburg and ploughed Antietam yield
New spoils each spring, and fairer for old wars—
They sleep the sleep that no detraction mars;
But, oh, how many humble, hidden spots,
Where but my wild flowers keep their calendars,
Where only wandering vines visit their plots—
Where my blue mountain-skies meet their forget-me-
nots!

With each returning year have I not seen
Their little hillocks growing into green,
And watched your proud procession take its way,
More sad, more slow, more slender with each May?
Have I not said, as in your heart I saw
Leap the old flame for liberty and law?—

*Salute! Salute! They come again,
The meager line of grizzled men.
Once more, in withered hands, they bring
The primal blossoms of the spring;
And well may youngest flowers be flung
On their old dead who died so young.*

*The mounds are lower year by year,
The hands are dust that heaped them here,*

*But let the little colors brave
Still flag the unforgotten grave;
And let the bugle's golden throat
Carol the old heroic note!*

*Now they return. Salute again
The meager line of grizzled men!*

A few more summers to their fall will glide
And you, with them, will come to seek my side;
And where two men are meeting one will say,
"The last old Union soldier died today!"
Doubt not my sons of coming time will keep
Your true fame sacred in the long, long sleep—
With theirs who spilled their cup of life to make
My fair land yet more fair for freedom's sake!

While from the southland, with impetuous rally,
Come up the armies of unnumbered springs—
When o'er dim hollows in ravine and valley
The dogwood spreads her cloud of snow-white wings,
When the spurned cardinal his love-pain sings,
When the evening star grows larger and more bright,
Will come sweet thoughts of old, heroic things—
As banks of honeysuckle, out of sight,
O'erload the dreamy brows of heavy-lidded night!

*Hail to our old-time saviors! men will say,
Who loved not honors less, but honor more.
They heard the music plead, yet would not stay—
Tasted the wine, how sweet! and yet forbore.
For them the day, going or coming, wore*

*His magic mantle, and the night her zone
Of love-charmed stars, yet from the low dark door
Of duty could not turn them! Friends unknown,
For you shall lilies rain! for you the rose has blown!*

COLUMBIA'S EARS ARE ASSAILED BY DISCORDANT VOICES

First Voice

The hounds of death are hunting in the East,
Black as their kennel, coursing in full cry.
Earth hears the baying of each red-mouthed beast,
And hell unhoods her falcons up the sky.
Thanks for the sundering sea, and may his waves run
high!

Second Voice

O Titan of the West, serene and proud,
Men—*free* men—are the quarry; kings give chase!
Can'st thou be still when tyranny is loud,
And keep the constant color of thy face?
Thy pride may be thy shame—thy safety, thy disgrace!

Third Voice

The princes rage; the peoples without light
Imagine a vain thing. But, far from these,
Lift up thy starry balance on the night,
And thou shalt see the nations at thy knees,
Unhelmeted, their brows bending to thy decrees.

Fourth Voice

Wake! Wake, long-slumbering land; put on thy strength!

Soon thine own house may shudder to the blast,
And all thy shining shore's unguarded length
May bring thee little comfort at the last.

Arm, arm for thine own right! Ah, bitter need thou hast!

OVER THESE SHE HEARS THE VOICE OF HER PEOPLE
RISING IN PRAYER FOR HER

O Thou whose equal purpose runs
In drops of rain or streams of suns,
And with a soft compulsion rolls
The green earth on her snowy poles;
O Thou who keepest in thy ken
The times of flowers, the dooms of men,
Stretch out a mighty wing above—
Be tender to the land we love!

If all the huddlers from the storm
Have found her hearthstone wide and warm;
If she has made men free and glad,
Sharing, with all, the good she had;
If she has blown the very dust
From her bright balance to be just,
Oh, spread a mighty wing above—
Be tender to the land we love!

When in the dark eternal tower
The star-clock strikes her trial hour,
And for her help no more avail
Her sea-blue shield, her mountain mail,
But sweeping wide, from Gulf to Lakes,
The battle on her forehead breaks,
Throw Thou a thunderous wing above—
Be lightning for the land we love!

AT THE END IS HEARD THE VOICE OF ONE SINGING

My country! my country! my country!
They say thou art craven and weak;
Thou wilt leave the brave sword in thy scabbard,
And turn to the smiter thy cheek;
Thou wilt count the bright coin in thy coffer,
Thou wilt garner the gold of thy grain,
Thou wilt look on the death of thy children
Untouched by the wrong or the pain!

My country! my country! my country!
They say thou art willing to stand
And see the last battle of freedom
Lost, lost for the lack of thy hand!
Thou wilt hear the far roll of the cannon,
Thou wilt see the dim smoke and the stain,
Thou wilt gird up thy star-robcs about thee,
And turn to thy traffic again!

My country! my country! my country!
They lie that will say of thee so!

The stars that have led thee shall lead thee—

The hours of His Judgment, they know!

Thy feet will be swift on His pathway,

Though the grapes of His wrath should be red:

Thou wilt leap to His trumpet, my country,

With the might of thy quick and thy dead!

My country! my country! my country!

There is never a leaf that will fade,

There is never a flower that will wither,

In the garland thy fingers will braid!

Their praise will be blown from the mountain,

Their song will be sung by the sea!

Immortal, immortal, my country,

The sons that shall perish for thee!

PANAMA HYMN

WE join today the East and West,
The stormy and the tranquil seas.
O Father, be the bridal blest!
The earth is on her knees.

Thou, Thou did'st give our hand the might
To hew the hemisphere in twain
And level for these waters bright
The mountain with the main.

In freedom let the great ships go
On freedom's errand, sea to sea,—
The oceans rise, the hills bend low,
Servants of liberty.

The nations here shall flash through foam
And paint their pennons with the sun
Till every harbor is a home
And all the flags are one.

We join today the East and West,
The stormy and the tranquil seas.
O Father, be the bridal blest!
Earth waits it on her knees.

COLUMBUS

A Fragment

Who is this
Leaning on his vessel's rail,
Heeding not the wind
In his tattered sail
Nor the water's roar and hiss,
Sailing where was never sail?
It is he,
Vagabond of Italy,
Bold in heart but touched in brain,
Peddling worlds from throne to throne,
Offering hemispheres in vain;
He that filched the royal gems,
Fooling so the crown of Spain!
Now he drops his hand and now
Shades again his heavy brow,
Peering for that billow's crest
Where the east will kiss the west.
Hail, and let him pass.
What has Spain in store for him?
Titles, triumphs, and, alas!
Fetters for the neck and limb.
Prophet-sailor, pass!

1892

THE REPUBLIC

(*Chicago, 1892-1893*)

"There is a mystery . . . in the soul of state,
Which hath an operation more divine
Than breath or pen can give expressure to."
(*Troilus and Cressida*, Act III, Scene 3.)

A GAINST the gray horizon-rim
Her figure looms august and dim,
And long winds blow the mist of lakes
From off colossal brow and limb.

Around her throne, before her feet,
The multitudinous nations meet;
The ocean of their voices breaks
In many-murmured music sweet.

As when upon his column's throne
The sculptured victor sits alone,
Nor sees his never-ending train,
The circling triumph, climb the stone,—

She sits, nor sees the endless train
Whose thronging triumph fills the plain,
Nor how the lost Hellenic wand
Is waved about her seat again,

Till lake and marsh, lagoon and isle,
Smitten, with sudden beauty smile,
And long-forgotten glories stand
In tower and dome and peristyle.

She sees her primal rivers pour;
She sees her waving forests hoar,
And round her unascended peaks
Her warring eagles swoop and soar.

Unmoved she sits, with solemn chin
Upon her breast and broods within,
Tasting the salt of ancient tears,
The bitterness of what has been.

Her hands are clasped across her knees.
Around her rise the hymns of peace;
She hears them not—upon her ears
The storms of battle swell and cease.

The saviors of her doubtful day
Are with her in her dreams, and they
That lacked the sinews, not the will,
To wrench her scepter-staff away.

(Slowly her strength the Titan learns,
Dimly her dawning fate discerns;
She was conceived in strife, and still
The birthmark on her forehead burns.)

How few the living ranks appear
To her for whom the dead are near,—
 As if across her miles of corn
She dropped the kernels of an ear.

She hears the spirit bugles peal;
Her buried armies rise and wheel,
 Marshaled by men of lion look
And lips that close like steel with steel.

And who are these like millions more?
They burst the era's bounteous door;
 They led the lakes into the sea;
They bowed the mountains to the shore.

Her sailors brown salute her now,
And stubborn hands that steered the plow,
 And judges, calm and level-eyed,
And sober statesmen, broad of brow,

And prophets at whose wakening word
The sluggard age's venom stirred,
 (They move serene and valiant still,
Nor even now their loins ungird,)

And that dark race whose wrongs suffice
To weigh its freedom's peerless price,—
 A people lifted out of chains
With might of mingled sacrifice,

And some who made their mortal beds
Where fame her flower, unfading shed,
 And many, nameless now, that bear
Like heroes their unlaureled heads,

And scholars, lone amid the throng,
And—crowned with lilies, borne along
 On the triumphal tide of souls—
The pure and lowly lords of song,

By whom the holy muses wrought
Their unresisted will and taught
 Her night of tears and starless gloom
The brightness that her dawn has brought.

All hail her, as in days that were,
And feel the patriot pulses stir,
 And long to leave their heaven again,
Again to live and die for her.

She hears the empyrean's tone
Blent with the prairie's, upward thrown,—
 Her nation's shout, a trumpet blast
In long reverberate thunders blown.

She hears and smiles in slow surprise;
Her limbs to awful stature rise;
 The sunlight trembles in her hair,
And all the future fills her eyes.

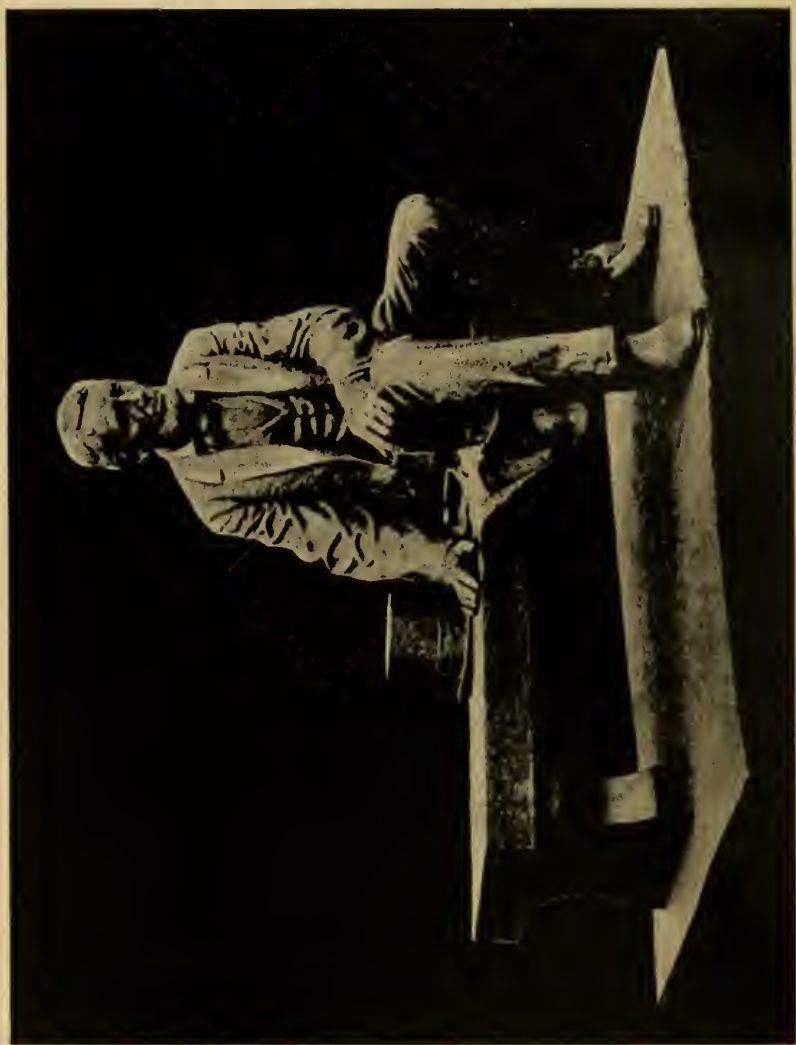
Mother, in whom our hearts believe,
With whom we hope, or faint, or grieve,
 Oh, tell us what those radiant, rapt
And far-off gazing eyes perceive!

*I see the last war-flag unfurled,
Fear and oppression hellward hurled,
 The smiling ages, hand in hand,
That wait to bring the better world,—*

*One law, one love, one liberty,
One light that beams from sea to sea,
 From morning land to evening land,
The splendor of the time to be!*

LINCOLN

SAY—if men ask for him—he has gone home,
Home to the hearts of all that love their kind;
And they that seek him there, there shall they find
Their man of men, in all men's hearts at home.
The Mother made him of her common loam
And from her world-wide harvest filled his mind,—
Poured from all paths, that from all quarters wind,
As in old days all highways poured to Rome.
She said: "I make a universal man,
Warmed with all laughter, tempered with all tears,
Whose word and deed shall have the force of fate.
I made not seven in all, since time began,
Of men like these. They last a thousand years.
They have the power to will, the will to wait."



"ONE OF OUR PRESIDENTS"

*The Statue of Lincoln by Gutzon Borglum at
Newark, N. J.*

HE sits there on the low, rude, backless bench,
With his tall hat beside him and one arm
Flung thus across his knee. The other hand
Rests flat, palm-downward by him on the seat.
So Æsop may have sat; so Lincoln did.
For all the sadness in the sunken eyes,
For all the kingship in the uncrowned brow,
The great form leans so friendly, father-like,
It is a call to children. I have watched
Eight at a time swarming upon him there,
All clinging to him—riding upon his knees,
Cuddling between his arms, clasping his neck,
Perched on his shoulders, even on his head;
And one small play-stained hand I saw reached up
And laid most softly on the kind bronze lips
As if it claimed them. These were children—yes—
Of *foreigners*, we call them, but not so
They call themselves; for when we asked of one,
A restless dark-eyed girl, who this man was,
She answered straight, "One of our Presidents."

Let all the winds of hell blow in our sails,
I thought, thank God, thank God, the ship rides true!

FUNERAL MARCH

(Chopin)

O H, gone from us! Oh, gone, for ever gone!
Wherever now his triumph he repeat,—
Whatever realm his greater coming greet,
From us for ever, ever, he is gone!
Lift up thy head, O nation, thou hast won!
Over the drum roll of thine old defeat
Upsoars the victor pæan, seraph-sweet,
From millions upon millions pressing on.
O land reverberant with freedom's tread!
O sky the alleluiahs overfill!
O conquering soul! The dumb earth has her will.
Take up, bear on the many-laureled head!
Let mortals weep and angels carol still,
For ever and for ever he is dead!

ON THE PHOTOGRAPH OF A LYNCHING

THIS is the fruit of that forbidden tree
Whereof the nation that doth eat shall die—
The tree of hate whose fruit is cruelty.
This nation eateth, and the feet are by
Of them that bore its brothers to the tomb:
The grave is ready and the dead make room.

This is the end of Justice and of Law:
The ages travailed and have brought forth this!
Here closes the sweet dream the prophet saw.
The seraph's song ends in the serpent's hiss.
The phoenix mounts refurnished from the fire:
The swine returns to wallow in the mire.

See these fanged faces leering round their prey!
Are these the sons of unforgotten sires
That hewed the wilderness for Freedom's way,
And lit the midnight with her beaconing fires?
Not sons, but bastards, howsoever named!
In these ghoul forms the shape of man is shamed.

Here in this picture let the black man read
The noble white man's view of what is just!
His fathers were the victims of white greed;
His mothers were the victims of white lust;
And if he learned his lesson but too well,
Pupil or teacher—which deserved this hell?

Thousands of readers, but no heart is stirred.
Hundreds of statesmen, but no move is made.
Ten thousand prophets, but no trumpet word.
Millions of men, cold, cruel or afraid.
No brave blood burns with anger at the sight.
God ring the curtain down—put out the light!

No, no, my country, no! Thou shalt not die;
The grave was never made that shall hide thee.
The old brave wind will yet come blowing by
And thou wilt leap to life and liberty,
And, striding o'er the obscene monster's maw,
Bind on resplendent brows thy down-slipped crown of
Law!

THE CURSE

L ORD God of battles, harken to the sound
Of all old blood-fields now uprolled in one!
Men rise in rivers, and the nations run
Together. The great stones go round and round
Between whose faces men like grain are ground.
The sea spawns death. The blue sky has begun
To draw gigantic birds 'twixt cloud and sun.
They drop the excrement of hell; they wound
The lad at play, the maid in her white bed,
The suckling on the breast. O God in bliss,
Must these things be? The man whose heart said this,
Let him call on the hills to hide his head,
For living he shall hear the world's long hiss,
And every tongue shall damn him being dead.

August, 1914

PEACE AND WAR

(Suggested by William Watson's Sonnet of the same name)

SO war shall follow war to the world's end!
Mad with the changing moons the human sea
Must fall and roll, gashing himself with glee,
Foaming at lip. The Samson wind must bend
Round the sky-columns till the roof descend;
And white with panic the proud waves must flee
Or shudder into chasms, and hell must be
Naked—as she is now.

Not so, my friend;
No immortality attends on wrath.
The Shepherd will yet fold His flock in peace.
One day the welter in the hearts of men
Will know His step—the storm slink from His path.
At His low word the bellowing mouths will cease,
And the maned waters will not rise again.

DIES IRÆ

A GAIN the cry goes up, *How long? How long?*
But not, *How long, O Lord? How long, O men?*
Will ye come down into the grave again
When the Kings call ye? Will ye sing the song
As ye are coming?—"See us, we are strong,
And life was sweet with all that might have been.
Look that your eyes be pure, O Masters, when
Ye strike the balances of right and wrong!"
It is the Doom of Kings, the Day of Wrath.
O Kaisers, fill the bloody goblet up,
And drink today the last drop in the cup!
Ye sup not so again till time shall cease.
The headlong mower with his crooked snath
Hears on his heels the even steps of peace.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE

O THOU that in thy hand dost keep
A hollow where the storm can sleep,
Whose pure and tranquil purpose lies
Unfolded in the star-deep skies,
Make here the reign of hell to cease:
Give thy perturbèd planet peace!

“Our Father”—so we pray to thee!
One family on earth are we;
One world is ours of splendor brave,
Our common womb, our equal grave;
Yet more of mercy than we show
Devil from devil-damned may know.

Fulfilled, thy gentle Prophet’s word!
Not peace: I came to cast a sword,
For certain days his wrath to wreak,—
Until the mighty are the meek,
Until the loving are the strong.
But oh, great God, how long, how long!

THE OATH

LORD God of Sabbaoth,
Out of a hundred lands
We lift to thee one oath,
Swearing with holy hands!

We wage one war on war
Till the last gun-rote cease.
Our flag streams with one star,
The shining earth at peace.

Our Fatherland shall be
Where the heart's red rivers run,
Wherever breaks the sea,
Wherever shines the sun.

Wherever lips have speech
We raise our battle-call:
On! for the right of each,
Armed with the might of all.

NEW YORK

O TITAN daughter crouching by the sea,
Playing with ships and channeling the sands,
And gathering evermore in eager hands
Poor shells and pebbles for thy jewelry,
Unheedful how the nations swarm to thee
From all the shallows of distressful lands,—
More busy braiding weeds in idle bands
Than mothering the millions at thy knee,—
Oh, when thy destiny shall bid thee rise,
And thy god-heart with love of man shall burn,
How towards thy feet the human tides will yearn,
While all the muses waken in thine eyes,
And floods of blessing leave thy lifted urn
As April mornings overflow the skies!

MENS JUDEX

HIGH on her single-seated judgment throne,
With forward-gazing eyes, girded, erect,
Sits the wide-browed, undaunted Intellect
Resolving her own doubt. Love making moan
Clings round her neck; and reaching to her zone
Pale Pity kneels; and striving to deflect
Her forthright vision Falsehood stands bedecked;
Blind Rumor's trumpet in her ear is blown,
And with raised hand white Vengeance whispers, "Slay!"
Unmoved she sits till Falsehood glides away,
Rumor lets fall his trump, Vengeance his stone,
And Love and Pity turn aside to pray;
Then, calling back her angels heavenward flown—
Justice and Truth—she hears these two alone.

THE POET'S CALL

(Whittier)

GOD spake in the still small voices
That breathed from the ancient wood;
And the message became a quenchless flame
And burned in the young man's blood.

"Are all my prophets buried?
Are all the harps unstrung?
Are all the Bibles written?
Are all the pæans sung?

"No more in the heart's deep silence
Is the voice of my spirit heard?
Never again shall the sons of men
Behold the incarnate word?

"What if my ancient altars
Their sacred fires have lost?
What race shall want its oracle,
What age its pentecost?

"My holiest of Holies
I make this woodland dim:
What letteth here the mystic trance,
The perfect prayer and hymn?

“Be thou mine own anointed,—
My singer, priest and seer,
A trumpet at the lips of God
For all the host to hear.

“Thy pen shall score another page
Upon the sacred scroll,
A purer David’s psalm be sung,
And the rent robe made whole.

“Know me for the Unchanging.
Go, speak the word I gave.
Think not my arm is shortened now
So that it cannot save.”

And so the page was written,
And so the psalm was sung;
And God hath spoken in our day
As when the world was young.

1887

A BRANCH OF PINE

(Hung above a portrait of Whittier)

SINGER whose going all men mourn,
What shall our tribute be?
Only the winter pine-branch torn
From the tumultuous tree!

We know what perfect flowers belong
Where silent poets sleep;
The roses o'er thy bed shall throng,
And the pure lilies sweep.

But not the bard alone we frame
Within this greenwood cheer:
We crown the prophet without shame,
The fighter without fear.

This waif from winter's wildest hill
Deserves a smile from thee:
It holds the scent of summer still;
It whispers of the sea.

Some likeness of thy youthful day
Was in its stormy strife;
Something its verdure seems to say
Of an unfading life!

Wherever now in airs of heaven
The fronded palms are blown,
Dost thou not hear, more faintly given,
The song our pines intone?

1892

EPIGRAM

*(Suggested by the laudatory tablet erected by the City
of Boston to mark the site of Wendell Phillips'
forty-years' residence)*

READER, in this the City has done well.
But if you think a prophet bold as he
And burdened with as bitter truth to tell
Would find her tamer now—try it and see.

WENDELL PHILLIPS

Teach me, dread boughs,
Where from your twigs the sad muse culls her leaves
When she a long-neglected garland weaves
To bind great brows.

Give no leaf less
Than his unlaureled temples should have worn:
So may his spirit pass me not in scorn,
But turn and bless.

I fondly dream!
How could my crown, though rich with crust and stain
From tears of sacred sorrow, win such gain—
That smile supreme?

Short-stemmed and curt
His wreath should be, and braided by strong hands
Hindered with sword-hilt, while the braider stands
With loin upgirt.

Too late to urge
Thy tardy crown. Draw back, O northern blond!
Let black hands take, to bind the southern frond,
A severed scourge!

Haughty and high,
And deaf to all the thunders of the throng,
He heard the lowest whisper of his wrong
The slave could sigh.

In some pent street,
O prophet-slaying city of his care,
Pour out thine eyes, loose thy repentant hair,
And kiss his feet!

Little it is
That thou canst pay, yet pay this recompense:
All tongues henceforth shall give thine ears offence
Remembering his:

All grace shall tease
The flush of shame to thy averted cheek;
Best Greek shall mind thee of one greater Greek,
More godlike ease—

Blessing and blight,
A bitter drop beneath the bee-kissed lips,
Hyperion's anger, passing to eclipse
And arrow-flight!

Thou didst not spare:
Thy foot is on his violated door;
Therefore the mantle that his shoulders wore
None else shall wear.

Above thy choice,
This Coriolanus of the people's wars
Could never strip his brawn and show his scars
To beg thy voice.

Struck by death's dart,
(In all the strain of conflict unconfessed),
He carried through the years that wounded breast,
That poignant heart.

Last from the fight,
So moves the lion, with unhasting stride,
Dragging the slant spear broken in his side—
And gains the height!

1891

THE WENDELL PHILLIPS CENTENARY

(November 29, 1911)

R ISE proud o'er Massachusetts Bay,
O sun, this autumn morn!
A hundred years ago today
Our king of speech was born.

True king was he, for all he spake
The ear of sorrow blest:
He waved his scepter but to break
A bond from the oppressed.

His head the Graces all had crowned,
His lips the Muses dowered:
From the sad Pilgrims' barren ground
The plant of splendor flowered,—

Our Chrysostom—our golden-lips—
Our Murray—silver-tongue—
Whose words fell as the honey drips
The Hybla bees among,—

Our bright Apollo, from whose bow
The soft-winged arrow sped
That left the haughty lying low
Or pierced the Python's head,—

Our slender David with his five
Smooth pebbles from the brook—
When on Goliath he let drive
How all Philistia shook!

The barrier of his blood he broke.
Patrician born and bred,
He came to join the common-folk;
Their own plain life he led;

Never to sue to them for place
Or profit or applause:
He came to plead the people's case,
Eldest and holiest cause.

That wizardry the gods bestowed
With the calm gift of speech
Was used to lift his brother's load,
The hated truth to teach.

If like a Roman senator
Round him his robe he drew
A stouter tribune of the poor
The Forum never knew.

For all the lost and desolate
Woman and man revile,
Saint Francis at the cloister gate
Had not so sweet a smile.

No column of the sculptured stone
For him uprears its head,
By no proud trumpet, loudly blown,
His sacred fame is spread;

But by the freedman's grateful tears,
By woman's holy prayers,
By sweeter sounds that labor hears,
By the new wreaths it wears,

By songs that cheer the serf and fright
The despot on his throne,
By every blow for a brother's right,
Is Wendell Phillips known!

ON A PORTRAIT OF HENRY W. PAINE

LOOK on a lawyer here, par excellence!
If in your judgment that should mean that he
Must needs be sinewy and adroit at fence,
Bold in assault, sudden in repartee—
So in good truth he was. But if you deem
He must be likewise shrewd to overreach—
One man to be, another man to seem—
So was he not: he matched his thought with speech.
He came at manhood to the lists and threw
His gauntlet down with modest courtesy.
For two-score years, whatever trumpet blew,
None took the gage up with impunity.
Yet not in sword or shield he put his trust;
Thrice was he armed, having his quarrel just.

TO SIMON WOLF

PHILANTHROPIST

“CALL no man blest till his last day is done,”
The Theban counseled with uncovered head.
And if life's blessing be a cloudless sun,
Which yet may be o'ercast, 'twas wisely said.
But if our blessings of ourselves are born
And they that bless the world are ever blest,
The day may keep the splendor of the morn
Whatever storms may gather in the west.
For thee, dear friend, who all thy life hast striven
To blow aflame the love-enkindling spark,
If all the lamps be blotted out of heaven
Their going will not leave thee in the dark:
Thou shalt be lighted by the light thou givest,
And so we call thee blest while thanking God thou livest.

GARRISON AT BENNINGTON

HERE where the meadow grasses fringed the street
And shadows fell from the green mountain height
He crooned above his types, hearing the sweet
Voices of future fame by day and night.
And here one eve the footworn Quaker* came
Bearing the dark load of a race's wrong,
His lonely eyes lit up with freedom's flame,
His stammering lips mighty with freedom's song.
Forth from this place the summoned warrior went,
Snow-white in armor, and the sword in hand
Which from its aim was never to be bent
Till slavery died upon a blood-soaked land.
Fit spot—most fit—for that high trumpet call
That comes one day, welcomed or spurned, to all!

* Benjamin Lundy, who came from Baltimore, Maryland, walking a large part of the way, to enlist the young editor in the cause of the slave.

THE SHAW MEMORIAL

'TIS Boston's self bestrides the nervèd steed!
Bone of her bone and fire of her own fire,
This young life, eager to give all at need,
Guiding the dumb inflexible desire
In these dark faces to the fated field,—
Grave of that tyranny they once had fled
To crouch beneath the shelter of her shield!
'Tis Boston at her best when all is said.
But who gave Boston from *her* bonds release?
Her printer youth, doing his work so well
His words, though winged as messengers of peace,
Blew slavery by cannon-mouths to hell.
O Garrison! St. Gaudens' work will be
As one leaf in that crown the far time weaves for thee.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

HE cried to every passing hour to stay,
Lend him strong hands and break the tyrant's
rods.
The heedless hours went by, but far away
The slumbering years woke like avenging gods.

THE CRY OF THE DARK

GOD'S wrath is kindling. Fear it, each false priest
Of law and justice! He will surely smite
People and priest guilty against the light.
Tremble, you Christians who deny the least
Of Christ's own brothers! Justice has not ceased,
If "Justices," misnamed, see black and white.
The whisper of the wronged rolls up heaven's height
In thunder; his avengers are released
Ere yet the crime is finished. Surely He
That led the fathers through a land blood-dewed
Will not desert the children when betrayed.
Think you God is a white man, He that made
Three quarters of the whole earth darker-hued?
There are no bastards in His family.

THE FORUM

MAKE wide the doorway of the school
Around whose sill the millions wait—
The cradle of the common rule,
The forum of a stronger state.

Make broad the bar, and bid appear
The questions clamorous to be tried,
And let the final judges hear,
Themselves, the causes they decide.

Write bold the text for age to read
The lesson not discerned by youth;
And raise the altar of a creed
Whose only article is Truth.

Though fair and dear the ancient mold
Wherein the burning thought was cast,
Pour not the New World's glowing gold
Into the patterns of the past.

Whatever channels lead apart
The currents of the lives of men,
The blood that left the Common Heart
Shall leap with common pulse again.

VERMONT

A Song

MY heart is where the hills fling up
Green garlands to the day.
'Tis where the blue lake brims her cup,
The sparkling rivers play.
My heart is on the mountain still
Where'er my steps may be;
Vermont, O maiden of the hills,
My heart is there with thee!

Oh, you may find a prouder dame,
With jewel at the ear
And richer robe and louder fame,
But never face so dear!
No queen has had for followers
A bolder train of men;
And when again the need is hers
They shall be hers again.

My heart is where the hills fling up
Green garlands to the day.
'Tis where the blue lake brims her cup,
The sparkling rivers play.
My heart is on the mountain still;
My steps return to thee,
Green-hooded maiden of the hills,
Lady of Liberty!

VERMONT

*An Ode**

DEAR little State among the dark green hills,
Who for thy never-changing bounds didst take
The long bright river and the azure lake,
And whose deep lap the short-lived summer fills
With sudden sweetness till its wealth o'erspills,—
How shall we sing thee for thy beauty's sake,
Or praise thee in a voice that shall not break
For pathos of the theme wherewith it thrills?

What if on flying feet thy summers go,
And the strict gods of beauty and of power
Poured in a casket small thy peerless dower?
Who would not rather feel love's fiercest throe
Than count the vacant years the loveless know—
Reign with the rose her one imperial hour
Than live the summer long a meaner flower?
Be glad: thy crown is greener for the snow.

Thou sitt'st with loins upgirt like those that wait,
Not those that slumber; and around thy knees
True sons of thine, scorers of fear and ease,
Make music of their toil early and late;

* Read at the one hundred and tenth Commencement of Middlebury College.

For thou art fitly compassed in thy state
By fields of clover reddening to the breeze
Hummed over by the blithe and laboring bees
And guarded by the mountains calm and great.

Swarm after swarm thy children have gone forth,
But still the old hive keeps its golden store,
Filled by the same bright service as before
With frugal bounty and unwasted worth;
And still they fly, far west and south and north;
Their murmur fills the land from shore to shore;
And if but few return, what myriads more
Dream of thy face and bless thee for their birth!

They dream of thee! Of them dost thou not dream?
Didst thou not show them in their happy prime
Thy deep-wood secrets—teach them in their time
The lapsing legend of the lingering stream—
Awe with the shadow, lure them with the gleam—
And at the first touch of the autumn rime
Weave them the glamour of a magic clime,
And paint their palace with the rainbow's beam?

And they are still thy children though their feet
Follow hard trails in the tumultuous town,
Or to the mighty waters have gone down;
And though they long have heard the surges beat
On alien shores where alien tongues repeat
Their names, and of new men have earned renown,
They are thy children still, and every crown
They win is thine and makes thy dream more sweet.

At times thy musings take a darker hue,
And thou hast sight of some war-furrowed field
Where once the smoking squadrons charged and
wheeled,
When Liberty her periled trumpet blew,—
And down through all the vales thy heroes flew,
With thy old deathless valor fired and steeled,
To make the glorious legend on thy shield,
“Freedom and Unity,” forever true.

Sometimes with its old scorn thy lip is curled—
Thinking how on thy borders, east and west
And south and north, thy foes around thee pressed,
And all their bolts upon thy head were hurled—
When thy young flag was suddenly unfurled
And thy lone eagle left his stormy nest,
Soaring above grim Mansfield’s darkening crest,
And screamed defiance to the whole armed world!

Yet these are not thy symbols. Scorn and ire
In thy deep soul are but a passing mood.
But thou dost watch with sweet solicitude
The plowfields putting on their green attire,
The blue smoke curling from the cottage fire,
The little schoolhouse, many-scarred and rude,
Half-shrinking in the shadow of the wood,
And ringed with loving elms the tall white spire.

Nor wilt thou turn away from hours like these
In the still closes of the cloistered town,
Where generations of the book and gown

Lead their pure lives under the tranquil trees.
Such pensive ways thy sober spirit please;
 And thou dost muse in many a volume brown
 From far-off golden ages drifted down—
Old inspirations, raptures, reveries.

Mother of men! Thou whom the hills enthrone,
 From whose bright feet the rivers haste away,
 Thou of the ages art, we of a day;
Yet we have loved thee and thy love have known.
And if with too faint breath our reeds are blown
 To carry the great burden of thy lay—
 Yet some true notes among our measures play—
The shame will all be ours, the honor thine alone.

COME HOME

*For the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the
admission of Vermont to the Union*

HO! all you Vermonters about,
Come home for the latch-string is out,
Give the gods of the hills the old shout,
Vermont!

Red-clover's in blossom, old chap.
There's a sprig of the spruce for your cap.
There's a little green strip on the map—
Vermont!

Oh! the bounds of her kingdom are strait,
But the hearts of her people are great.
All our hearts for the stout little state—
Vermont!

THE OLD PINE

(Overheard talking to himself)

UNDER my gray-green mantle,
Jeweled with sleet or rain,
Was hid a harp that murmured
For ever of the main.

The breeze from Newark mountain
Bore down a song to me;
I sang it to Moosílauke,
And he sang it to the sea.

The loitering Passumpsic
Smiled on me from afar;
He was to me a lover,
I was to him a star.

On Silsby's snowy pasture,
Above the balsam spires,
The surly morning kindled
Her pale, belated fires.

Down Sleeper's River valley
And up the woodlands dim
The summer twilight hearkened
The holy thrush's hymn.

* * * * *

I had learned the art of living—
Lesson mortals rarely learn—
To make all that comes against me
Yield me strength and serve my turn.
All the sinews that sustained me,
All the sap that kept me warm,
I had sucked from sand and snow-heap
Or had wrested from the storm.
On the everlasting ledges
I had set my feet so fast
I could scoff at all the blizzards,
Cry, "Come on!" to every blast.
Rain and snow and hail were welcome;
All the gales were loud with glee;
All the strife and strain of winter
Was but ecstasy to me.
When the big wind of December
Blustered down from Walden height,
I rubbed all my hands together—
Knit my muscles for the fight,
Stretched abroad my arms and took him,
Hugged and cracked his ribs amain,
Till he slunk away in anguish,
Whining down across the plain.

Year by year I flew my banner
For a standard seen of all—
Stood a king above my fellows,
Like a crowned and sceptered Saul.

Then, unwarned, the lightning smote me,
And I stand discrowned and blind,
Waiting for my strength to leave me
Or the tempest to be kind.

THADDEUS FAIRBANKS

*Read June 24, 1892, at the semi-centennial of the
founding of St. Johnsbury Academy*

MANY we miss who wander far away,
Many whom death has silently withdrawn;
But *one* there is whose absence dwarfs the day;—
He should be here, whoever else were gone!
That tall spare figure with its slight incline,—
Too strong to bend or stoop for all its age,—
Like our grand sentinel, the old hill pine,
Leaned by the northwind's century of rage,—
That firm, calm face where yet are faintly seen
The hardships overpassed, the triumphs that have been.

He should be here—pride of our festival—
With shrewd, kind eyes under his brow's half-frown,
Observing, scanning, scrutinizing all,
Wearing his ninety winters like a crown.
He made this home-return the joy it is,—
Unstinting giver of his heart and store;
The very songs we praise him in are his,—
His children that return to bless his door.
The day is his, though days with him have ceased,—
Missed from the board, but still the master of the feast!

THE SPIRIT OF AUTUMN

THERE comes a day in the subsiding year
I love to veil the firmament with mist
And lend the mountain-top a softer bloom
Than the unmindful farmer with rude thumb
Rubs from my purplest grape. Then men may look
Upon the sun yet live, so pensively
He smiles upon them, so reluctantly
Releases his fierce arrows. Near and far
Make furtive interchanges. 'Tis my art
Brings the far chopper's faint, insistent stroke
Startlingly near; and then, anon, conducts
To distant dreamland the obstreperous brook,—
A smothered gurgle. Up the sleepy lane
Between the long, dismantled thorn-bushes
The great cart drones and lumbers, overpiled
With brown earth-apples wearing still the soil
Upon their faces, taper-rooted beets
Full of the ground's red blood, and, seen through all,
The big, round-bellied pumpkins ribbed with gold.
These are my guerdons, not at all less prized
Than those my gently nurtured vineyards bear,
Or far-sung boughs in bright Hesperides.

THE SECRET

HOW was the lyric caught?
Where was the music made?
Fairies the rhyme-spell wrought
Deep in their golden glade;
And the wonderful word was brought
By the river their white feet wade.

So the noons of summer sleep,
And the great white clouds go by,
While you hear the soft wave's creep,
And the lone bird's silver cry.
The fairies their revel keep,
And that is the reason why.

ROBIN

MY Robin wears a dusty coat,
A waistcoat rusty red,
He flaunts no color in his crest,
No plume upon his head,
Yet Robin brings the boldest air
And sings the blithest song,
And, oh, for that note
Of his bonny brave throat
My heart has loved him long.
Robin!
Robin!

Through all the weary winter time
My Robin roams afar;
He's sounding through the Sunny-land,
His notes of love and war.
I wait him by the casement cold,
I feel his absence' wrong,
Yet, oh, for one note
Of that bonny throat
My heart would wait him long.
Robin!
Robin!

But now the winter's almost gone,
And will he come again?
Dear Robin, with the blossoms come,
Come up the orchard lane!
Oh, hide beneath the apple-bough
And sing the old love-song,—
It's oh, for that note
Of thy bonny brave throat
My heart has waited long.
Robin!
Robin!

TO N. B.

(October 5, 1903)

I SEND you my heartiest greeting.
My tardiness gives me no shame:
It was not until last week-a-Thursday
I was even advised of your name.

I reckon nobody has missed me;
There were plenty to make an ado,
To congratulate daddy and mammy:
I want to congratulate *you*.

Had you entered with less circumspection
You might have found life but a fake:
In this matter of choosing your parents
It is easy to make a mistake.

To have a bold heart in your bosom,
And wear a sound head in your hat,
The books recommend, to be *born* so:
There is no better method than that.

By the shrewdness with which you selected
Your cradle and crooners, I guess
You will turn your attention to living,
And make it a perfect success.

TO WENDELL HOLMES GARRISON

(1894)

LITTLE Wendell, you and I
Should be comrades by and by,
Well united by the same
Precious and heroic name:
By that token we are peers,
'Spite of three and thirty years.

Wendell, there's a tie to bind
Thee and me in closer kind.
In the cruel days of old
Men and babes were bought and sold.
Then *your* father's father blew
Blast on blast the nation through:
Then *my* father's father heard
And obeyed the trumpet word,—
Humbly, but as best he might,
Kept the faith and fought the fight.

Little Wendell, you and I
Have another, nearer tie;
For the nearest 'neath the sun
Is the universal one.
Men are nearer, each to each,
Than their deepest words can teach.

For our help the world is waiting,—
Yearning, hoping, fearing, hating.
Let us fling our love around it,
Leave it better than we found it,
Happy if our brothers see
Christ Himself in you and me,—
By our coming understand
That His kingdom is at hand.
This shall be a tie to bind
Thee and me in closest kind.

TO L. A. L.

(February 1, 1908)

NEW actor on this old sad-merry scene,
Your cue is *welcome* and your part is *queen*.

Long waited for, long prayed from Powers above,
Now fallen in warm and outstretched hands of love,
Fear not these stormy skies, for faith and hope
Can crowd with summer stars your wintry horoscope!

MY INHERITANCE

THEY say he was a jolly man,
This grandsir' whom I never saw.
When all my aims flash in the pan,
When days are dark and airs are raw,
A joke bursts somewhere in my brain,
And I can laugh and sing again.
I say, "Perhaps this merry whim
Is my inheritance from him."
But then, what legacy began
To yield the income I can draw?
I'm glad he was a jolly man,
This grandsir' whom I never saw.

A PETITION FOR GUARDIAN

(A Scene in the Probate Court)

“**Y**OU pray for a guardian over your son.
His name is—ah—Joseph? Is this man the one?”

“No, Jedge; that is William, the one that should be Guardeen to his brother. Here’s Joseph by me.”

“Well, hold up your hand. . . . Now what is the ground?

Is the young man a spendthrift? Non compos? Un-sound?”

“Well, Jedge, he’s peculiar. Was always jest so
Sence he was a leetle one, larnin’ to go.
Can’t call him a fool, for he knows a big heap;
But it ain’t any value to sell or to keep.
It’s all about ‘beauty’ and ‘love’ and ‘devotion’
And glories of airth and the stars and the ocean.
He thinks he hears voices that hold him from sleepin’;
And sperrits are round him and he’s in their keepin’.
He’s chipper by spells; but he’s full of his moods:

He’ll hang his head down and not speak fer an hour.
I’ve sent him on arrants, in spring, through the woods,
And he’d get on his knees to every flower.

Nor yet he ain't lazy: he never would shirk.
When any's in trouble, my sakes! how he'll work!
But he'll work jest as quick fer a man 'at can't pay
As if he was gettin' his dollar a day.
Nor he ain't jest a spendthrift. But what can ye call it?
He'll be ragged and give the last cent in his wallet.

"He stood t'other day with a coin in his hand.

'Whose money's this 'ere?' says he, turnin' to me.
Says I, 'It's the dollar ye airnt on the land:

Ain't it yourn if ye airnt it?' 'I airnt it,' says he,
'But the dollar ain't mine. If I keep it it's curst:
It belongs to the fellow that needs it the worst—
And I'm goin' to find him.' And so he put off.
'Twant never no use to laugh or to scoff.
I'm old, and I'll shortly be laid on the shelf,
And Joseph ain't fit to look out for himself.

"But William is diff'nt,—takes after his dad.
Bill's got the fust penny that ever he had!
He always took boot when he swapped with the boys,
Till he scooped all their jackknives and trinkets and
toys.

He's smarter'n a trap, if I say it as oughtn't,
And the hook can't be baited so Bill can be caught on't.
And I've often told Joseph, if he'd be like Bill,
I'd do by 'em both jest alike in my will.
But I've gi'n it all up; and it's plain to be seen,
Joe'll never be nothin,' 'less Bill is guardeen."

The Judge sat awhile with a far-away look,
Then wrote in his docket and shut up the book.
"I've found this question unusually hard:
It is, which should be guardian, which should be ward.
I shall give the appointment to William," said he,
"But, the chances are, Heaven will reverse the decree."

A MORE PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION

THE lawyer, intent at his table,
Held Chitty apart by a leaf,
While his quill ran creaking and straining
Down the driest page of his brief.
A footfall—the rickety stairway
Groaning each step like sin—
A silence of hesitation—
And his visitor ventured in.

“I’ve bargained my woodland, lawyer,
And want the deed made out;
I fetched the old one with me,
To give the bounds about.”
The squire took up the paper
And read, in hurried tones,
“Beginning, for a corner,
At a stake in a pile of stones,
Thence northward (rods so many),
Thence east (so many more),
Thence south to a brook called Miller’s,
And back along the shore”—
Then he rose and went to the window,
Rubbing his glasses hard,
And stared at the mating robins
In the elms across the yard.

“Yes, yes! I know this woodland,—
It’s many and many a year,—
Perambulated it, in fact.
(This deed, though, isn’t clear.)
I saw it last in the summer
Before I was twenty-one;
But I can tell today, sir,
How the boundaries ought to run:
Beginning in the shadow
Of a low-boughed maple tree,
Thence winding up a thicket
As far as you can see;
Turn at the leaning bar-way,
Follow a lane of flowers
To a corner kept by squirrels,
Where the sun sleeps hours and hours;
Then take the mossy footpath
Adown the alder dale,
Hung over by the birches,
Crossed by the rabbit’s trail,—
Beside the brook that lingers
Along a dusky glen
With here and there a whisper,
And a trout-leap now and then,—
As far as two may wander
In the twilight, heart in heart,—
And back to the bound begun at
For a place to kiss and part.”

He stood and watched the robins,
And one particular pair

That seemed to be having a quarrel
In the elm tree over there.
But the farmer had gone; and his neighbors
That took the farmer's say
Debated the squire's insanity
For a twelve-month and a day.

CID

ON that sad day Fate ordered us to part
Love bade me stop the beating of your heart,
And so I did.
But when you failed to answer my caress
I said: "For me, however Heaven may bless,
From this day on there is a friend the less."
Goodbye, old Cid!

MY LADY OF DREAMS

MY lady goes to the dance tonight;
Her feet glide free and her eyes glance bright,
But her heart, sighs she,
Is away with me,
Where I dream and dream in the dim firelight;
For she swears she is mine
While the true stars shine,
And I call her My Lady of Dreams divine.

So while some partner of excellent taste
Is whirling her round and round by the waist,
I am holding her white ethereal hand,
(All quite by myself, you will understand),
And trying my bravest to make it appear
The girl he is whirling is really here,
Where we dream and dream in the crimson glow,—
Where music breathes from the books we know,—
And she swears she is mine
While the true stars shine,
And I call her My Lady of Dreams divine.

THE OLIVE BRANCH

THE life of man is only a span,
'Twas a mighty long time before it began;
And whether we frown or whether we smile,
We're going to be dead a very long while.
Then don't you think we're asses, brother,
To spend a minute in hating each other?
Let us not say a single word
Would trouble the daisies if they heard
Or carved in the marble would look absurd.

WHAT WILL ROBIN SAY?

IT was a bonny laddie
Cam' here upon a day,
And I—I spake him kindly,
And Robin was away.
'Twas sic a bonny laddie,
Sae canty and sae trim,
And, oh, before I knew it
I'd lost my heart to him!

Each hour I love him dearer—
And what will Robin say?
It's me a twelmond wedded
And thrown my heart away.
We maunna part, my laddie,—
Apart we canna live,
But you're sae like your daddie
I'm hopin' he'll forgive!

NAMING THE BABY

COME, name the child, my dear. What's in a name?

Yet we are molding now the speech of men;
For, oh, how many, many thousand times
This name will be pronounced in days to come!—
With tender iterations of the home,
With every fond addition and sweet change
That love delights in,—crooned in cradle song,
Then shouted on the green by boys at play,
Then murmured softly, under moon and stars,
By lips that make it music,—then, ah me!
Bandied about the rude ways of the town,
In praise and blame, from kindness to scorn,
And blown, perhaps, world-wide for ill or good,—
Spoken at last, one day, with awed, hushed breath,
Then treasured in a few fond, faithful hearts,
Read a few years upon a low, white stone,
And then for ever, evermore forgot!

So name the child, my dear. What's in a name?

LULLABY

SLEEP, my baby, all the night!
Star and star for candle-light
Shining softly all about.
Not a breeze to blow them out.
Not a saucy cloud but soon
Sails from off the placid moon.
Moon and star the watch will keep:
Go to sleep!
Go to sleep!

Go to sleep, my baby dear:
Never fear!
If the wind blow out the light,—
If the moon go out of sight,
All the hours of dark and dew
Will the mother watch by you.
Mother still her babe will keep:
Go to sleep!
Go to sleep!

THE BOY WHO LAUGHS

HAS life to this my little boy,
An underflow of hidden joy?
Often, the house in silence deep,
I hear him laughing in his sleep.
'Tis such a happy, gurgling sound!—
As if the river of his dream
Had overleaped some silver bound
That broke the tenor of its stream,—
Had sparkled in the sun, and then
Glided away in shade again.

Laugh on, unheeding, not unheard,
Like some unseen, untroubled bird
That sings his song and never knows
What hearts are lightened as it flows.
Thank God for laughter! Later years
That thank Him for the gift of tears
Shall hold the boons of equal worth,
And bless Him for the gift of mirth.

R. S. S.

(September 20, 1894—May 24, 1901)

WE shall not miss thee less but more,
For ever more, O silent little son,
As our dull days go on,
Each finding hope's predicted deeds undone,
Losing some field of joy thy presence would have won.

We shall not lose our memory's blessed store.

We see thee as before,—

Nothing inert,

The bright blue eyes alert,

And light foot on the poise to skip and run,

The thin lips curling into fairy fun,

And brow whose promise large was read of every one.

Oh, paradox of misery!

For sudden sorrow smiled,

Seeing thou didst but pause

To be for aging hearts the sweet, immortal child.

Not thee, dear little lad, we lost not thee;

But we have lost the man that never was

And never was to be.

CÆLUM NON ANIMUM MUTANT

FROM sky to sky they pass with soul unchanged.
My love would find them in the furthest star.
I feel their love for me, however far
In unimagined fields their feet have ranged.
Spirit from spirit cannot be estranged,
And hearts will touch if all the worlds would bar.
Blessed be God! who made us as we are,
To pass from heaven to heaven with love unchanged!
Two souls, to me and to each other dear,
My father and my child, before me stand,
From happy places coming hand in hand.
It is not memory makes the sight so clear;
It is not hope that brings them smiling near;
It is love's answer unto love's demand.

AN OLD BIBLE

IT lies upon my table here,
Shiny with use and dark with age
And stained with salt of many a tear
Along the blurred and yellowing page,
The holy book they pored upon—
Grandam and grandsire dead and gone.

This book was clasped by one whose load
Was more at times than she could bear;
Like some rude cross beside the road
It heard the fainting pilgrim's prayer.

The page was turned with longing keen
(How oft before the hands were clean!)
By hands more used to reap and sow
Or strike the forest-echoing blow.

You see upon the margin yet
The soilure of the noonday sweat.
Such marks as those you notice now
Were on the handles of his plow.
Ah! let the faint reproof be stilled,
Since they who hungered so were filled.
For days were hard with toil and care,
And there were many mouths to feed,
And many turns to answer need,
And many, many griefs to share.

Is there a richer-bordered tome
In all the breviaries of Rome?
The patient monk in sheltered nook
Adorning year by year his book
With mystic flower and holy sign
Has left a missal less divine.

It stood the focus of a room
Where all the ways of life went on,—
No talisman in guarded gloom,
But truth to read where daylight shone.

It was a cup for lips to take
Whose thirst no other draught could slake,
A lifted sign 'twas life to see,
A sword to smite The Enemy
With zeal that brooked no priest's control
But battled singly for the soul.

The scholar's gloss they never heard;
This book was all the schools to them;
But in life's press they found The Lord,
And healing in His garment's hem.

Our fortune falls on better days,
On richer, fuller times than theirs.
(But *are* they rich, if poor in praise?
And *are* they full, if void of prayers?)

Your work is over, weary ones:
Sleep on at last and take your rest!
God only knows what far-off sons
In your prevailing prayers are blest.

EASTER

O DOUBTING heart, if God is love,
The resurrection morn is sure!
O death, if God is less than love,
Make thou the sepulcher secure!

MY DEFENSE

O FRIEND, the sun your light may be,
And mine the glow-worm's spark;
Yet must I follow where I see
The light amid the dark.
And surely He that gave to me
This lantern strange and dim
Can show the way by night or day
That leadeth unto Him.

THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS

TO think that He was once a child, a man!
Felt the soft mountain mosses press His foot,
And spread His fingers in the brook that ran
Under the fir-tree's brown, o'erbending root;

To think that He watched for the first white star,
And wondered what fine sails the silver moon
Hoisted to clear the sunset's golden bar,
Like any child, and went to sleep' as soon;

To think that He was cuddled in kind arms,
And held against His mother's warm, smooth cheek,
Believed her kiss had healing for all harms,
And learned to love before He learned to speak;

To think that He, too, felt His father's hand
Bathing His play-stained face with waters cool,
And leaned to watch him as he worked or planned,
Admiring the great arm and shining tool;

To think that He was pleased with little toys
His father made Him when the work was done,
And drew them round the house with laugh and noise
Until His mother said, "Be still, my son;"

To think that He would wander in the field
To find the lilies, sumptuously dressed,

The foxes shying to their holes concealed,
The spotted sparrow safe upon her nest,

And never think of Solomon at all,
And how the lily had no need to spin,
Or guess that anywhere the night could fall
On men who had no place to slumber in;

To think that He grew up a fair, tall lad
Whom all the village loved, and went to school,
And shouted with His fellows and was glad
To make the silvery plunge into the pool;

And yet to think He sometimes must have walked
All by Himself, when summer suns were low,
Until the twilight and the starlight talked
In the strange tongue that only dreamers know!

Because, whatever more He may have been,
He was a man, like any one of us,
In every single way except the sin,
Still crowded out by love's great overplus.

BEHOLD THE DAY

(January 1, 1901)

BEHOLD the day The Lord sends down,—his dearest,
Most beautiful of all about his throne,
With azure eyes the sweetest and severest,
Far-flaming sword and silver wings far-flown!
His naked foot is on the mountain nearest,
His golden trumpet to his lips upthrown;
And for thine ears, O world, if thou but hearest,
The summons of the century is blown:
“The word of truth that shaketh all foundations,
The word of love that maketh all its own,
The word of beauty, crown of all creations—
These shalt thou hear and heed and these alone.
Love, Truth and Beauty—for all tribes and nations
Be these the names whereby our God is known!”

A PRAYER

THOU that canst hush the sea and brood the land
And softly lead the wandering worlds above,
Keep thou within the hollow of thy hand
The one I love.

Lay on her head the crown of all delight,
Lily and rose and not a leaf of rue;
Clothe her with courage and immortal might,
Strength to be true.

And give her faith, O Father, give her faith
In every mask thy visage to perceive,
And hear above all storms thy voice that saith,
Believe! Believe!

Thine was the hand that struck the kindling spark
And lit our torch with love's triumphant light;
Let all the winds that beat it in the dark
Make it more bright.

LYRICS

I

SOMEWHERE she waits my coming;
Somewhere the wind out-blows
Her raiment like a river;
Some over-happy rose
Dies in her maiden bosom;
Some bed her beauty knows.

And I, against that morning
When I shall find her fair,
Upon her mouth the springtime,
The summer in her hair,
And in her eyes a midnight
When all the stars are there,—

Against that wondrous morning,
My sorrow's crown or cure,
I store my soul with music
To make my wooing sure,
And sue the holy angels
To keep me strong and pure.

And when at last I find her
Upon her virgin throne,
I know her lips will answer
With words we know alone,—
Will welcome and salute me,
If all the world disown.

II

GO, little song, and nestle there
 Where all your notes are heard,
 Breathed over at her lips with air
 Like apple blossoms stirred,
 And brooded by her eyes and hair—
 Bird mother with her bird!

Perhaps the fount of feeling strong
 May tremble at the brim,
 And she may murmur, musing long
 With eyelids brightly dim,
 "I love the singer for the song—
 I love the song for him!"

III

WINTER still his load is bearing,
 Lady mine.
 Of the springtime hither faring,
 Bud and blade and blossom wearing,—
 Of the red-breast lovers pairing,
 Not a sign.
 But your coming is a guerdon
 Far more fine;
 And my heart has cast its burden,
 Lady mine!
 Lady mine!

Not a love earth-born and mortal,
 Lady mine,
Makes my pulse at every portal
 Leap, like wine;
'Tis a spirit bond that never
Years or seas or stars may sever,
 All divine,—
Love that maketh one forever,
 Lady mine!
 Lady mine!

IV

O BLESSED bough I may not see,
 Though evermore the April blow,
Today my love will come to thee
 To dream the dreams of long ago—
Tell her what dreams of *her* must be,
 Piercing as perfume, pure as snow!

If Robin come to rival me
 And waste his heart in one wild throe,
Tell her that far away from thee,
 Unseen, unheard, I sing her so.

If mists from off the mournful sea
 About thy branches wavering flow,
Turn them to tears, O happy tree!
 Ah, tell my love, I miss her so!
Just touch her forehead, trembling low,
 Tell her for me, I kiss her so!

V

“**W**HAT were you doing, my flower,” said the bee,
“All the long days you were waiting for me?”
“Sucking the sweet of the ground, my lover,—
Hoarding a heartful of honey for thee;
Shutting my lips to all kisses, my rover,
To open heart-deep, should you brush them once over.
That is the way I was waiting for thee.”

VI

BOBOLINK, bobolink, teach me the tune
You are singing your Love in the heart of the
June!
'Tis the very same music I'd make to my own,—
That song you are flinging
'Twixt winging and clinging
Ere scythes are set swinging
And younglings are grown.
“Why this is the way: When your throat would
o'erflow,
You just let it go! you just let it go!
There, there! you have heard it! The secret's your
own.
'Tis as easy as flying—
As easy as trying—
As easy as sighing
When summer is flown!”

VII

DO I love you, little lady?
Ah! there's nothing else I do,
All the bright and busy daytime,
All the starry silence too.
Things I do and dream and suffer
Just express my love for you.

Darling, it will be so ever;
When my day and dream are through,
If you search the tall grave-grasses
And find there a blossom too,
You may know my dust has made it
To express my love for you.

VIII

PURITAN or Cavalier,
Which was finer, lady dear?
Which had won from you, my lady,
Pensive smile and happy tear?

In your voice the lyrics flow;
In your veins the roses blow;
Sun and singing, love and laughter,
Follow, ever, where you go.

Yet your heart is ever sure;
And your eyes are pure as pure;
And a world above our vision
Bends to bless you, and allure.

All the Courtier's lilt and light,
All the Roundhead's truth and might,
Must have met in him, my lady,
Who had sung your praise aright.

Now no saint or chevalier,
Puritan or poet, dear,
But an acolyte at altar
Kneels and kneels for ever here.

IX

IF God had made me a painter,
I had filled the earth with your face;
If God had made me a poet,
I had sung you in every place;
If God had made me a monarch,
I had throned you the world above;
But he only made me a lover, my lady,
And so I could only love.

But oh, how He gave me to love you,
'Tis only Himself can know!—
Love pure as the light of the morning,
And rich as the afterglow,
And haughty as noon, triumphant,
O'er-flooding the earth and sky,—
And star after star through the night afar,
Shall my love be when I die.

Oh, sweet as her kiss to the sailor
As he leaves his bride of a day,
And brave as the harbor breezes
That speed him along his way,
And fierce as the tempest that lashes
The terrible strength of the sea,
And sad as the wail for a vanished sail,
Is the love that I bear to thee!

X

I do not sing
Because the spring
Makes mad with music everything:
I sing to let my lady know
I love her so!
I love her so!

I do not sing
To see her fling
The door of summer wide a-swing:
I sing to let my lady know
I love her so!
I love her so!

I cease to sing
Because the wing
Of winter waits for wandering:
I hush—to let my lady know
I love her so!
I love her so!

XI

DEARER, lady, and diviner,
Year by year, you grow,—
Richer, truer, fairer, finer,
Sweeter, ever so.
Not a shade of change or warning
Shall love's mirror show
Till the gracious golden morning
Cease for thee to glow.

Love is all the light that lingers,
All the sun that warms,
All the cunning of the fingers,
All the might of arms,
All that smiles in angel faces,
All in hell that harms,
All the muses, all the graces,
All that cheers or charms.

Oh, my lady, love for ever!
Music never dies
On Love's lips: the lightnings never
Darken in his eyes.
Trust him in his strangest story;
Wait his last surprise—
Earth flung by, a faded glory,
See his stars arise!

XII

COULD I put you in a picture,
Now, as now you smile on me;
Heap the hair in such a halo,
Curve the brow as daintily;
Men would make a shrine to shield it:
All the world would kneel with me.

Could I put you in a lyric,—
Pour your sweetness in a song,
All the birds and bards would learn it,—
All the silver-throated throng:
Not a note of other singing
But would do the ear a wrong.

Write the poem, paint the picture—
Well, but would I, if I could?
Show the world my dream—divinest,
Human-est of womanhood?
Ah, God knows! In heaven, it may be,
I shall ask Him if I should.

XIII

THE Lapidary divine
Set in the zone of the year
A jewel for every day,—
Gems from eternity's mine,
Each with a different ray,
Rosy or lambent or clear.

His angels heard him say:
 "Now bring me the queen of the mine,
 The sun that will all outshine,
 For I will set it here!"

That was thy birthday, dear.

XIV .

SWEET, I love thee, love thee, love thee!
 That is all my wisdom, sweet,—
 All the creed the heart confesses,
 All the tale the lips repeat:
 Verse and vision, song and silence,
 In the tender message meet.

Whatsoever scene surround me,
 Whatsoever face I see,
 Evermore my heart is saying,
 "O my sweet, I love but thee!
 Phantasms, when will you vanish—
 Leave my love alone with me?"

Sweet, is that perhaps the heaven
 Death, and death alone, will bring?
 I shall see thy face before me,
 Feel thy arms about me cling,
 Here thee say, "Awake, my darling!
 Earth is conquered: Love is King!"

XV

BE as you were before I knew
The least touch of your finger tips,—
Or ere the child-god knelt and blew
With puffed-out cheeks and pouting lips
The coals of love between us two,—
When I was I and you were you,
And neither dreamed we could be more:
Be as you were before!

Ah, yes! be as you were before!
Some far-off fineness love hath lost;
Too dear the nearer joy hath cost;
Let the light god his theft restore.
Put on that sweet reserve once more.
How long the timid rôle sustain?
Oh, not too long! just—to be plain—
Till I dare kiss you, dear, again,
Be as you were before!

XVI

LOVE can hold fast a thousand things
Between his slender hands—
The Cæsar's sword, the muse's wings,
The gold of gliding sands;
Yet all they stay with fond delay
A breath bereaves them of:
Life—life is quick to slip away
Between the hands of Love!

Could his locked fingers but retard
The unreturning tide,
We'd pray him, darling, to discard
All treasured boons beside,
While we today the spring's sweet spray
Wove round him and above
Ere life should wholly slip away
Between the hands of love.

XVII

AS one who in his guarded youth has had
So many dreamy days to make him glad
He cannot, for the glory in his breast,
Ask of the world such prizes as the rest,—
Or one long loved of fortune, soon to die,
Who looks for nothing in the happy sky
Half so delightful as the life he found
Here in this precious-painful plot of ground—
So, love, I seem to stand between the past
And all that may be coming, to the last,
Scarce wishing more than to keep pure within
Some memory of a sweetness that hath been.

XVIII

ONE prayer my lips will part, love,
Where'er I bend the knee:
That what to me thou art, love,
I may become to thee,—
A sweet hope in the heart, love,
A dream, a melody!

Love's not a flower to wear, love,
To fade as soon as won;
It is a height to dare, love,
Not, not to rest upon,—
A light we never bear, love,
But follow ever on!

XIX

LOVE'S song should be as transient as his tear,—
Born on the lip and dying in the ear.
So mine be born—so let it die, my dear,—
From me to thee!

Love's lyric is too light to be enscrolled,
Too fairy fine for aught of earth to hold.
Why should it tarry when its tale is told
From me to thee?

XX

OF my gifts may none bereave thee
Though we part;
For thy brow a crown I weave thee,
For thy lips a song I leave thee,
O my heart!

Crowned for earth and for the ever-
Blessed throng:
And the dull Lethean river
From thy lyric lips will never
Lave the song!

XXI

COME slowly up the pearly way,
Past night's pale ruins and his single star,
O thou divinest day—

Day that shall give my tender love to me!
I would not lose
One lazy footfall of the lingering hours
That draw thy dreamy car,
Queen of all days that have been or shall be,—
Shine after many showers!

I bid thy wheels delay
Now that I see thou shalt become my own:
A beggar should make haste—
A queen be sober-paced,
Coming at will to her acknowledged throne.
Let other days speed on,
Let them be born and gone,
I do not bid them wait:
Their dull eyes give no sign,
Their lips bring me no bliss;
But thou, my one day golden and divine,
Smile and delay thy kiss!

XXII

HE that loves is never old
Though his years cannot be told:
Youth and Love were of a birth,—
Twins to bless the troubled earth,
Sweet my friend.

Howsoever sere the land,
 Youth and Love go hand in hand
 To the end.

Let the day be overclouded,
 Let the way with mist be shrouded,
 Birds be dumb:
 They'll not miss a gleam or feather—
 Youth and Love—they fare together,
 And they bring their own bright weather
 Where they come.

He that loves is ever young,
 Whatsoever dirge is sung:
 Howsoever far the land,
 Youth and Love go hand in hand
 Evermore.

Oh, my darling, whatsoever
 Other tie may slip or sever,
 Youth and Love will sunder never,
 Nevermore!

XXIII

OLD sweethearts are the sweetest,
 As all true lovers know.
 Old comforts are completest,
 In sun or shade or snow.
 Say, Sweetheart, is it so?
In gray and golden weather
We two go on together.
 Old sweethearts are the sweetest,
 As all true lovers know.

Old sweethearts are the sweetest,
 As all true lovers know.
 Young lover, as thou greetest
 Thy sweetheart, tell her so!
Ah, tell her, tell her so!
Time ties a golden tether
As we go on together.
 Old sweethearts are the sweetest,
 As all true lovers know.

XXIV

HOW do I love you, lady?
 Every hour
 Is a white-hearted flower
 Upon the vine that climbs your cloistral tower.

How do I love you, lady?
 Silence long
 Is one impassioned song,
 Madder with music than the nine-voiced throng.

How do I love you, lady?
 No one knows,
 For none may see the rose
 Nor hear the music where it ebbs and flows.

There is no answer, lady.
 Love, alas,
 Leaves on the lightest grass
 No way-mark of his faring. Let him pass!

XXV

HOW do I love you, dear?
How does the bee the bloom?
How does the bloom the rain?
Song—is it sweet to the ear?
Sweet to the sense is perfume?
Mercy to spirits in pain?

How do I love you, mine?
Ah, but so many the moods,
Many and many the ways!
How do the lips love wine?
How do the saints their roods?
How do the bards their bays?

How do I love you, love?
How does the soul love God,—
Tremble and fall at his feet?
Smit by the blueness above,
I that am born of the sod
Look up and love you, sweet!

XXVI

I LOVE you so, my lady,
That when I dream of you
I mind not how the music runs
Or if the words be true:
The heavens may all be ringing,
But only this I know—

It is of you, my lady,
They all are singing so!

I love you so, my lady,
That when the sweet day dies
One wish, a homing swallow,
Across the splendor flies:
The lily sail is lifted
And you are there with me
For one gold island steering
Adown the rose-red sea.

I love you so, my lady,
When tales of long ago
Will one by one o'erwhelm me
With a wave of sweeter woe,
'Tis you fulfil the legends
Of all the yearning years:
You are the sun of all the smiles,
The well of all the tears.

XXVII

HOW do I love? Alas! I dare not think.
Men have gone down into the caverned earth
And peered into abysses so profound
That the dropped boulder has sent back no sound;
And there have felt their spirits quail and shrink.

When my soul trembled to our first deep kiss,
I leaned o'er such a verge,—the blank abyss
Whose name is *loss of thee*, and o'er the brink
One heavy thought I rolled, and saw it sink
Into the answerless eternity!
That is the measure of my love for thee.

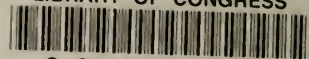
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